

# The Theory of Structure: An Analysis

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<https://www.e-ir.info/2011/09/26/the-theory-of-structure-an-analysis/>

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Neo Realism and Neo Liberalism are frequently cited as the overarching paradigms of International Relations. The theory of Structure is lesser known but equally as important to our understanding of International Relations. This paper moots the idea that formulating a *hierarchy* of beliefs is an act requisite to theoretical abstraction and our everyday practices. The notion wields scope to derail any holistic approach to International Relations, and poignantly affords the pretext to our opening statement. It is an institutionalised concept that shapes stocks of knowledge to follow; recurrent but not visibly apparent; prescribing and reproducing a set of beliefs that individuals assume to be of their own production. Most crucially, it accounts for the hackneyed assumption that questions relating to Ontology are of a more fundamental nature than those that address epistemology and methodology.

Working off this premise, this paper will examine the ideational and material elements present in Kenneth Walt's theory of international politics and Alexander Wendt's Social Theory of International Politics. We will examine what makes the theory of structure an 'anomaly', and whether a link connects this with particular units of analysis. Here we will consult the analytical approaches used by Anthony Giddens, Kenneth Waltz and Alexander Wendt. In addition the rhetoric of war will be examined in light of the 2003 invasion into Iraq. Through this interplay we will assess the role of institutions and norm building frameworks and how these relate to Power. The Paper will conclude with a brief discussion on the agency that remains for autonomous action in regards to the Arab Spring.

The Theory of Structure encompasses a range of interpretations and critical positions. For the purpose of clarity, we will firstly examine the stance assumed by Anthony Giddens in his book co-authored with Pierson, 'Conversations with Anthony Giddens'. We will then go on to consider Kenneth Waltz's theory of International Politics.

In the book *Conversations with Anthony Giddens*, the authors claim that structure and agency should be classified as dualities rather than dualisms. Form affects people in so far as structure is produced and reproduced in social action, and this entirely takes place within the domains of Society. (Giddens & Pierson, 1998: 77). This idea indicates that normative frameworks are important to our Social Cycle *precisely because* social actors are reflexive and socially permeable. Working off this basis and the idea that 'systems of generative rules and sets are implicated in the articulation of social systems', it follows that we ought to have cause to connect American Foreign Policy with internal normative frameworks and institutions. After all, the structural foundations remain the same. This prospect will be reviewed in the second part of the paper through the examination of the US Government's treatment of the 2003 Invasion into Iraq.

One reading of Giddens' book is that Structures are internally homogenous. This is to say that the duality of rules and resources remains identical, unless it is displaced or subject to alteration. But it is quite clear that a person's hierarchy of beliefs is subject to alteration. The component that wields the power to constrain, by Giddens' logic, cannot be internally homogenous; were this not to be true then identical rules and expectations would cover the global expanse. Giddens argues that rules and resources are applied reflexively by actors, but does not indicate that one's analytical framework ought to avoid determinism in a similar manner. The absence of determinism actually makes the theory difficult to empirically test. If a person's Hierarchy of beliefs cannot be classified under what Giddens deems as Structure, then by definition, it is not mutually constituted by rules and resources. Nor can a person's hierarchy of beliefs be classed as rules: they are not generalizable procedures implemented in enactment or reproduction of social practices (Giddens: 1984: 21). What is clear is that individuals draw on the three modalities of

# The Theory of Structure: An Analysis

Written by Elizabeth Pickworth

structure in putting their hierarchy of beliefs into practice, particularly in the process of assessing International Relations paradigms. Individuals firstly draw upon their interpretive scheme. Second, they establish moral norms on the basis of their normative framework, third, they draw on resources that pertain to a working notion of power. The use of and access to publishing rights and media outlets provide good examples of this. In a similar fashion, esteemed positions in field of education endow the power to secure and imprint different versions of an overarching normative framework, as evidenced by the prevalence of neo-liberal discourse across Ivy League Colleagues in the United States. This idea will be examined at greater length later on with reference to the language of imperialism and George W. Bush's pretext to invade Iraq in 2003. For now it is appropriate to revert back to the theoretical discussion at hand.

Giddens posits that the relationship between social practices and human knowledge is 'Double hermeneutic' (1987: 20). It is a notion supported by noted scholar Alexander Wendt, an important thinker, who drafted Social Theory of International Politics in response to Kenneth Waltz's Theory of International Politics.

In the Social Theory of International Politics, Wendt takes the view that that exogenous individualism only exists within the parameters of *Social structure*. To Wendt, anarchies acquire logic as a function of the structure of what is put inside them (Wendt: 249). He posits that Structure is formed by shared ideas and the culture of an anarchic system and recognises the notion that Structure and Agency are mutually constitutive. The crux of his argument rests in his framework of analysis. States may be exogenous in the world system, but this cannot be applied the whole way down. It is the operation of 'multiple logics on the macro level' that is of particular interest for this author, as it marks the point of departure from Giddens' text.

Alexander Wendt provides three types of anarchic structures at the macro level in his paper. Basing these on the role of friend, enemy and rival, he invites discussion about three completely different 'logic's of structure. It is under the conditions outlined that we set out to discover the degree in which states internalize their shared cultures. According to Wendt, such a process depends on the culture that dominates and the dynamic between power and interest. Four factors drive structural change from one culture to another: interdependence, common fate, homogenization, and self-restraint. Our case study incorporates components from the three cultures outlined in his thesis. This will be examined in greater detail later, but for now it is important to consider two points. First, Wendt makes the distinction between the formational elements of Hierarchy and Anarchy but does not apply this to what he conceives as Stocks of Knowledge. This unanswered idea is significant to our original hypothesis as it implies that the dialectic between interdependence and shared knowledge translate to maximal relations of destruction. The argument invites us to question the effect that hierarchy has on Stocks of knowledge. Second, Wendt posits that the balance of culture dynamic varies at the macro level. We are led to speculate as to what this might mean for cultures that do not conform to the models that he prescribes. Both of these queries will be attended to in the second part of the paper.

Alexander Wendt and Kenneth Waltz assume contrasting approaches to the notion of Structure. Waltz presents states and individuals as interchangeable units operating exogenously under anarchical conditions; Wendt argues that international norms and power disparities raise questions about this overarching frame. The fundamental distinction is that Waltz conceptualises structure in material rather than social terms.

It follows from this approach that Waltz assigns Structure as the distribution of capabilities; affirming that security concerns override all else. Units exist in a constant state of tension due to a balance of power dynamic that rests on the relative distribution of capabilities. There are some points of contention in his argument which this paper seeks to attend to. Problems arise over what Waltz omits to mention, and how he actively ascertains his argument. It is through his failure to consider systemic constraints that Waltz widens the gap between ontological approximations and existential reality. This finding is affirmed in our American case study and will be detailed later.

Second of all, it is the opinion of this paper that Waltz's approach to discourse is of a deliberate design, such that structure mirrors form. We conceive Structure in this sense as a mode of rhetoric. Here we are referring to the academic practice of forming an argument. Waltz assigns Foreign Policy and International politics as micro and macro domains; arguing that the fact of anarchy creates the single logic on which states interact. The single logic predicates a self-help system that produces military competition, balances of power and war. His argument

# The Theory of Structure: An Analysis

Written by Elizabeth Pickworth

capitalizes on a hierarchy of beliefs. Through these means weaknesses are revealed, on the basis that a sound argument should speak for itself. The analytical practice in question is subtle, despite being semantically recurrent: the hierarchy's ideational pretext and corresponding frame for argument is used to certify the single logic. That the notion of State Primacy tops Waltz's hierarchy of beliefs would be a case in point. State Primacy is bestowed unto the system through the existence of anarchy – a condition necessary under Waltz's definition of Structure.

Having outlined our central theoretical basis, we will now go on to examine the case studies in which these points will be assessed. First of all we will examine the backdrop in which President George Bush made the decision to go to invade Iraq. Here we will examine the importance of institutions and norm building networks with particular reference to the work of Alexander Wendt. We incorporate the work of Paul T.V into this discussion, who made important discoveries on the issue of US hegemony and power politics on this issue. We will finally conclude with a comparison between Kenneth Waltz' and Paul T.V's alternative approaches to power balancing. Our second case study, still under the topic of the US invasion into Iraq, will examine the supportive role of language in this interplay. Reference will be made to Hardt and Negri's 'Empire'; a text which explains its namesake as a domestic analogy and tool for analysis to explain international and supranational order. In the aftermath of the Invasion into Iraq American Foreign Policy has come under much greater scrutiny, and critics have increasingly lodged complaints of 'neo-imperialism'. We will touch upon this premise in light of the response of media outlets and politicians alike. We will also address whether Hardt and Negri's notion of 'Empire' in the structure of American society today. Finally, we will consider what light our previous discussion might shed on the recent uprisings in the Middle East and what has subsequently been entitled the 'Arab spring'.

The decision to invade Iraq in 2003 was met with a mixed reaction by the American Voting public. Some supported the decision, others characterised the motives as being littered with 'half-truths, misinformation and hidden agendas' (Chomsky: 2005). What is useful to our discussion is the way that this was, and is currently is, framed. One opinion poll states that prior to the invasion, 47-60% of the US public supported an invasion – pending U.N. approval (Benedetto: 2003). According to the same poll retaken in April 2007, 58% of the participants stated that the initial attack was a mistake (Sussmann: 2007). This illustrates a marked transition in normative positions. Alexander Wendt argues that Force, Price and Legitimacy affect the extent to which norms are internalised. Certainly, statistics that revealed the increasing number of American casualties threw the last criterion into disrepute; in part fuelled by the historical legacy of the Vietnam War.

In the case of Hobbesian Anarchy, Wendt's hypothesis predicates that norms construct agents. His frame of reference adheres to Constructivist prescription. In the case of the Iraq Invasion of 2003, legitimacy appropriated the role positioned by the generalised Other in those perceived to be responsible for harbouring weapons of mass destruction. It follows that Top-Down enmity lent to internalizing Wendt's 'Hobbesian Culture', and, in turn, constituted America's geo-strategic interests. Projective Identification is just one aspect of his frame for Legitimacy, a notion also supported by Hardt and Negri. The differences of locality are neither pre-existing nor natural but rather the effects of a regime of production' (Hardt et al. 2000: 45). It is no coincidence, then, that the Bush administration made calls to bring the legitimacy of the Taliban Government into question: for this would aptly convey the impression that regime was unable to maintain public order. In this sense, the United States waged a war on the politics of location.

As the duration of the war extended over months and hope began to wane, the previous normative position was sporadically dispelled into the past. American Power failed to achieve effective command over the Iraqi population because it did not become an integral function that every individual 'embraced and reactivated to their own accord' (Hardt et al. 2000: 24). Instead, George Bush's Iraq era doctrine posits pre-emptive action, fearlessness about unitary action and defence strategy to prevent the emergence of a new rival. The approach affirms Kenneth Waltz' notion of soft-balancing and firmly places our case study in the Wendtian category of Hobbesian Anarchy. Surpassing the parameters of Waltz's neorealist doctrine, the Invasion into Iraq also supports Wendt's discussion on macro variables.

Paul T.V argues the case for western bias and its self-evident disregard to ground level processes, structure and actors. His argument reaffirms Giddens' belief that we are all reflexive actors. Norms of the prevailing hegemon and

# The Theory of Structure: An Analysis

Written by Elizabeth Pickworth

second tier powers shape the world as we see it, ultimately constraining our cognitive agency. The example below supplies this frame of reference.

*The success of the American led invasion depended on post intervention peace keeping and stabilization offered by the UN and its members' (T.V 2005: 14).*

By engendering the peace-keeping efforts as western, the reader subconsciously combines politics of location with a benevolent normative frame for agency. This achieves the pre-designed intension of overwriting acts of agency that do not conform to hegemonic interests: a reconfiguration of material forces albeit through an ideational lens. In doing so, we find supportive evidence of Giddens' view that structure both constrains and enables human agency and that structure and agency operate in duality. We may use our cognitive capacity to filter out irrelevant or misleading information, but the principle construct of this information endures.

Our network of information, its composition and constituent parts, all inform what Wendt defines as our Stocks of Knowledge. Language is particularly important to this process, and impacts our ability to differentiate ontology from epistemology. The language of Imperialism may not be a concept that we are all actively aware of, yet it is a crucial tool for codifying norms. Treatment of the historical legacy of imperialism is inherent in our linguist patterns, as highlighted by Donnelly.

*There is a marked tendency to suppress the crueller aspects that it entailed. This pertains to America's modern hegemonic prowess, hence the prevalence of another range of terms that evoke euphemisms that may be applied as loosely as the laissez faire neo-liberal foreign policies that ascertain their war objectives. In America's case, this masks an unrelenting desire to preserve Pax Americana. (Donnelly: 2002)*

This supports the notion put forward by Hardt, who suggests that 'the linguistic production of reality and the language of self-validation resides a fundamental key to understanding the effectiveness, validity and legitimation of imperial right' (Hardt et al. 2000: 34). The pretext upon which the decision to invade Iraq linguistically engenders Projective Identification, under the paternalistic application of Neo-Conservatism[1]. It is through these means that Iraqi civilians were reduced to a lower standing than their American Counterparts, much in the same way that white, educated, western scholars lament about the hardships of females in the developing world and reassert a second stigma (Mohanty:1997). But the geopolitical language of imperialism is not just confined to the rhetoric of politicians. Media outlets use this tool to inflate fact into hyperbole and attract in a readers, as part of what Hardt might deduce as the 'new economic industrial communicative machine – a globalised biopolitical machine' (Hardt et al. 2000: 40).

An important factor in understanding America's treatment of the Invasion into Iraq is the initial absence of judicial foundation. This reveals much about the nexus of legitimacy, interests and norms. Alexander Wendt predicates that in a Lockean or Kantian Culture, shared knowledge is to an important extent institutionalised in international law and regimes. Manifestations are said to correspond at the domestic level (Wendt 1999: 272). But when a state locates its frame of reference for Sovereignty in its Security Policy, that State may misleadingly equate its distribution of capabilities with its own right to self-determination in an asymmetric fashion. America's treatment of the Iraq war encompasses what has just been laid out, albeit to a limited degree. The normative framework of the Bush Doctrine did not correspond with the UN Charter in its initial phase. However, we do know that international trading laws, for instance, are reflected in the commercial agency and norms of retailers and consumers in the United States[2]. This indicates that macro variables can dictate agency on the micro scale. In the other case, the United States did not explicitly invade Iraq on the grounds of self-determination. However, justifications behind the invasion indirectly connect to this basis. Disarming Iraq of weapons of mass destruction and ending Saddam Hussein's alleged support for terrorism pre-empted the potential for security concerns on a larger scale. (George W. Bush: 2003, Lynch: 2004). Iraq's refusal to comply with Security Council Resolutions was said to lie at the crux[3] (Lynch: 2004). Ultimately it is clear that the United States does not fit under the umbrella terms of Hobbesian, Lockean or Kantian Culture in perfect form. This is why a holistic approach to international relations is necessary, at very least where the application of paradigms is concerned.

The United States invaded Iraq despite not having a mandate from the United Nations to do so. This has

# The Theory of Structure: An Analysis

Written by Elizabeth Pickworth

subsequently thrown legitimacy of the act into disrepute – something that has not gone unnoticed in field of discourse.

*One component that defines the Imperial Mode of Authority is the formation of a new Right; inscribed in the deployment of prevention, oppression and force aimed at the reconstruction of a social equilibrium (Hardt et al. 2000: 17).*

It follows that the United States delivered its final blow to classical liberalism in violating the UN charter. Kenneth Waltz's theory of international politics offers an explanation for this: the state is a unitary actor that assumes primacy and security concerns override all else. But the reality of the situation was not quite as simple as that. Hardt asserts that 'Juridical transformations point towards changes in the material constitution of world power and order' – and America's actions demonstrated just that. Much commentary has suggested that violation underscored a new era in US Foreign Policy which marked the United States out as the Imperial Aggressor[4]. It is more likely that America has assumed this role for many years and only recently was the full extent and current prevalence of this made aware to US citizens. This sentiment is reflected by the national security and intelligence analyst John Prados in his 2004 book 'Hoodwinked'.

*'Americans did not like to think of themselves as aggressors, but raw aggression is what took place in Iraq' (Prados: 2004).*

A brief look at the history of American Foreign Policy in the past 50 years affirms that this is the case (Kagan: 2006). Alexander Wendt argues that identity and interest constructions can be sources of inertia if they are institutionalized, which provides a logical explanation behind the misconstruction of norms. The infrequent use of classical liberal ideology to justify neo realist exploits, combined with the globalisation of the internet and other information networks, may have contributed to this dynamic. The institutions that ensure this and their corresponding norms are borne out of the 'new economic industrial communicative machine' (Hardt et al. 2000: 40) that Hardt assigns to Globalised bio-political society: a component of the overarching structure.

This brings us to the contemporary issue of the Arab Spring and the role that power, interests and norms take in this. It is noteworthy that some of the recently 'ousted' political leaders were championed by their Western counterparts. Such a development indicates that international co-operation is driven by geopolitical interests, independent of the internal dynamics within the states themselves. Stabilizing oil markets have been a central tenet of U.S. policy for decades – this has often meant empowering dictators in oil producing countries at the expense of supporting democratic ideals (Huffington Post: 2011). It follows that the first task of Empire is to enlarge the realm of consensus that support its own power (Wendt et al. 2000: 15). Although we are not in a position to label the entire Western collective as an Empire, as an analogy this still holds true. Economic relations and Foreign Policy prevail on the international scale, and these are in turn determined by Political interests formulated on the micro scale. This supports Wendt's line of argument that the 'terms of exogenous individualism are stated from within' (Wendt 1999). Soft power relations and soft power-balancing relations both depend on these.

The Intervention into Libya was, to some degree, an exceptional occurrence. First, it had the backing of the Egypt-based Muslim Brotherhood's Guidance Council and the Arab League (Clotney: 2011); second, members of the Arab League lodged global appeals for assistance; third, there were legitimate grounds to apply the Responsibility to Protect Mandate. Despite these circumstances, NATO struggled to form a collective response. Likewise the consensus was late to be formed in the European Union (Catane: 2011). Deliberation, Bargaining and decision-making are important processes of any working international organization, and this is something that Waltz's account fails to take into account. Instead he assumes that under conditions of anarchy, material forces are at large in the international sphere. Although the crisis in Libya was largely seen as Humanitarian, issues relating to mass human movement and the potential for political overspill needed to be addressed. There is clear evidence of this in both Italy's and Turkey's response to the subsequent influx of refugees at their respective borders[5] (Maigaard: 2011). America's reluctance to allocate its capabilities further proves this point (Black: 2011). Wendt argues that the culture of an international system is based on the structure of roles and it follows that NATO had to respond the high 'forces of destruction' accordingly. Reasoning the course for action partly rested on the embedment of shared values and

# The Theory of Structure: An Analysis

Written by Elizabeth Pickworth

cases whereupon these were not mutually agreed. This would include the countries that abstained from voting on the decision to intervene, and those which voted against intervention. Kantian logic is said to be generated by weakly shared ideas (Wendt. 1999: 254) – here a similar notion was at large.

The aim of this paper has been twofold: to establish whether a hierarchy of beliefs permeates both academic discourse on the concept of Structure and to examine the relationship between structure and power. The case study of the United States' government treatment of the 2003 Invasion into Iraq has been shown to prove, and disprove, some of the findings of renowned scholars Alexander Wendt, Kenneth Waltz and Anthony Giddens. It has been proved that micro scale developments occur exogenously to the macro scale, but that recurring structural institutions permeates both of these frames for analysis. This both grants and constrains the opportunity for agency; a finding supported by Giddens' central argument. Our argument has dispelled of Waltz's notion that the state operates in unitary primacy, and discussed that anarchy is not the sole constituent of structure in the international system.

Our case study presents an analytical analogy to parallel Wendt's conjecture surrounding the notion of structure. In the same manner that Hierarchy is said to lead to co-operation and interdependence (Wendt: 1999), one's own hierarchy of beliefs renders the frame for analysis dependent on the structural composition of their discourse. It has been argued that such a technique is present in the respective paper of Waltz. This paper has taken the view that should an approach should be avoided when seeking to compile a holistic view of International Relations

Close attention has been paid to Hardt and Negri's analogical depiction of Empire with the aim of examining the nexus between power, norms and structure. Their central argument asserts that the constitution of the supranational entity is conceived as a contractual agreement grounded on the convergence of pre-existing state subjects. Our case study has shown that this prevails, in many different forms, through American 'Culture'. Here we are referring to Wendt's description of the term. Social production resonates in the language of imperialism – something that can be observed in President George Bush's pretext to invade Iraq back in 2003. The primary weakness of their argument is that it has been designed to apply to international and supranational entities. First, the implicit assumption that these entities exist is tenuous. Second, our cases study has illustrated that the theory applies to the domestic and international domains. But undoubtedly the central analogy has been a useful for the purpose of this paper. The opportunity exists for future research to investigate what constitutes the 'supranational sphere' in light of our findings.

This paper has found that structure is viewed to be an anomaly in the field largely because of the *nature* of its constituent components. This paper has aimed to show that practices of social production and reproduction are not difficult to locate if you relay the relevant evidence, contrary to this idea. The concept continues to be open to wide interpretation, as shown by the respective approaches of Alexander Wendt and Kenneth Waltz.

Ultimately this paper has aimed to provide empirical support to its ontological foundations. It has been an endeavour that has proven difficult at times. Future efforts could be improved by applying econometrics to assess what has been outlined as probable conclusions. This would help to identify whether the Hierarchy of Beliefs stands to be an empirically workable concept. It would provide positivist foundations to a predominantly rhetoric-based bank of evidence, and in doing so, improve the quality of argument.

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# **The Theory of Structure: An Analysis**

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# The Theory of Structure: An Analysis

Written by Elizabeth Pickworth

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[1] Part of this basis rested on the 'freedom of Iraqi people' (George W. Bush: 2003). This insinuates the regime in Iraq was not capable of protecting the freedoms of its people.

[2] 'The U.S. Constitution, through the Commerce Clause, gives Congress exclusive power over trade activities between the states and with foreign countries. These regulations promote free trade and fair competition, and prohibit anti-competitive business practices.

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) enforces federal consumer protection laws that prohibit fraud, deception, and other unfair business practices. The FTC also enforces federal antitrust laws that prohibit anti-competitive mergers and other business practices that restrict competition and harm consumers. The ITA promotes trade and investment through enforcement of U.S. trade laws and agreements, and works to strengthen the international trade position of the U.S' (Legal Directories: HG.org/trade)

[3] A multiplicity of factors continue to be in contention surrounding this issue. Paul. T.V argues that the United States hegemony is constrained by 2nd tier possession of nuclear weapons, internal institutions and domestic politics. Given that the issue of nuclear weapons is of central importance here, this is of particular relevance. Likewise the fact that the invasion was in part grounded on the 'freedom of the Iraqi people' incorporates focus on domestic politics. See (Paul T.V: 2005) for further discussion.

[4] The act of invasion supports Hardt's contention that 'empire is formed not on the basis of force itself but on the basis of the capacity to present force as being the service of right and peace. It is constituted on the basis of its capacity to resolve conflicts' (Hardt 2000: 15). See Judis: 2007 for further discussion.

[5] 'After the meeting with Arab League Secretary General Amr Mussa, which was held in Cairo on February 23, Frattini expressed concern that a civil war would erupt in Libya and result in an "epochal flow of migration towards the European countries." (Catane: 2011)

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